

### **How Democracies Die: Steven Levitsky, Daniel Ziblatt**

There are two things I find very difficult to understand. American politics and people. For the former there is fortunately the book *How Democracies Die* which explains how American politics and fascism are connected. The two authors have researched very well, are able to transport factual information to the reader and reproduce it in an understandable way. Since the book also considers current events such as the election and term of office of the previous president, these can be viewed in a historical context. European and global parallels are drawn and linked to form a fixed red thread that runs through the book. As a European, I had to revise many of the prejudices of American politics, such as the roles of Democrats and Republicans. Also, I can now see much better the background to why our world community threatens to drift into a new fascist era if we do not now uphold democratic values and protect the shining torch of humanity for the humanist community. This book is a must read for people who are less concerned with politics, because the complex structure threatens to kill them. In my opinion, this book should be included in the curriculum of universities.

### **Bullshit Jobs: The Rise of pointless Work and what we can do about it, David Graeber**

In recent years I have had very few books that have personally opened my eyes. You live somehow with your work and if you get paid well, you don't think much about your job. For example, I worked for a well-known telephone company for almost a whole year. Helpdesk. From time to time a person came out of the office and needed a new laptop or paper had to be added to a printer. Otherwise my time consisted of drinking coffee, surfing the internet and talking to the admins from the other department. What does that have to do with this book? David describes exactly these kinds of jobs that seem to surround us in heaps. He defines them in different classes and describes how the different activities work by means of "testimonies". This not only gives you a deep insight into the bullshit job work structure but also how you are involved in it in some places. The book goes in the scientific direction, only it rumbles at two points. The standing quotations disturb the reading flow generally and had rather into own statements of the author to be converted should. In addition, the footnote should always be placed on the same page as the citation, because no one wants to have to leaf to the end of the book again and again to look something up. Nevertheless, the book has a lot of information content and it is worth it with its 285 for a trip or a road trip. It is worth it, if you ask yourself why you are unhappy in your very well paid job. Maybe it's a bullshit job?

### **Rutger Bregman, Utopia for Realists - And how we can get there**

This book is positive, maybe too positive for some readers\*. The author deals with current topics such as universal basic income, the end of poverty and other controverse *better world* ideas. He takes examples from the history of mankind, well-known anecdotes and published studies. There are enough footnotes and sources to give interested people more information, although it might be more scientific at this point. The scientific aspect of the book is of secondary importance, however, because it is first and foremost about encouraging readers\* inside in simple and clearly understandable words. Therefore, in many cases topics are only considered one-sided, which does not harm the book. Rutger is absolutely an author whose development should be further observed, because in four hours he had an inspiring effect on me.

### **Amy Jones and Steward Lansley, It's Basic Income - The Global Debate**

This book is a good introduction for those who have not yet dealt with the subject of universal basic income. In six chapters different essays are presented, which take a close look at the pro's and con's of universal basic income. You don't have to be an economist, because the articles are clearly urbanized even for beginners. Although the authors selected by Amy and Steward from the two countries UK with 17 articles and the USA with six articles predominate, other countries also have their say. For example Belgium, Canada, Finland or India. Unfortunately, the counter-arguments from the only German article are very difficult to undercut in ignorance and embarrassment. One rather limits oneself to political phrase threshing, which one should publish at most in social media. At the latest from "...increasing migration..." you can skip the article without missing important information. On the other hand, the counter-arguments from Belgium, the UK and the USA have important points that should be considered in a public debate on a universal basic income. I am incredibly satisfied with this work, only the design disturbs me a little. I don't like flaps in the book cover and spine and the idea to print the headline of the subchapter once more on each page of the individual book pages is very distracting.

### **Fredrik Sjöberg, The Fly Trap**

The book *The fly trap* by Fredrik Sjöberg is one of the most beautiful autobiographical books I have ever read. It has brought me closer to entomology and how the work of some entomologists relates to recent developments in the field of biology. It shows the slowness of life, how art can take wondrous paths and why you simply have to love Swedish islands. Fredrik has a very good writing

style which, coupled with scientific details, makes his works rise to milestones in contemporary literature. A book to dream.

### **Kozo Yamamura, Too Much Stuff - Capitalism in Crisis**

I have an issue with scientific works are rewritten into books of popular science. Unfortunately, I am missing far too many references to literature and footnotes. Nevertheless, this book is perfectly suited to help you understand the economic triggers of the 2008 financial crisis, why the world has been slipping to the conservative/right, politically, since the 1980s, and that we are still not out of the crisis, no matter how much we try to convince each other of the opposite.. You have to be interested in numbers, data, statistics and politics to read this book, otherwise you will put Kozo Yamamura's work away very quickly. It is not a philosophical work as the title suggests, but a scientific work adapted for the general reader. Due to the unusual structure there are some repetitions, which can be exhausting for people with a good memory. All in all a well done work.